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A

P O E M

WRITTEN IN A

CHURCH-YARD,

BY

WILLIAM JOHNSON.

Shoemaker

The Man how blest! who, sick of gaudy Scenes,
Is led by Choice, to take his fav'rite Walk,
Amidst Death's gloomy, silent, Cypress Shades,
To read his Monument, to weigh his Dust,
Visit the Vaults, and dwell among the Tombs.

YOUNG.

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A T dead of night, when Luna shone most
clear,
And glitt'ring stars adorn'd the hemisphere,
Unto that lonely place I bent my way,
Where nature clad in solemn vestures lay;
Where old and young of every sex and birth,
Together mingle with their mother earth;
There I repair'd with reverential dread,
To view the stately mansions of the dead,
And contemplate the vanity of things,
The pomp of riches, and the pride of kings;
Here all are blended on one equal plan,
The last receptacle for mortal man;
To every meaner thought I bid farewell,
And with a pleasing melancholy fell

(While

(While tombs successive did attract my eye),
 Into the following soliloquy :—

AS all alone I pensive tread
 These dreary mansions of the dead,
 Let me the solemn scene survey,
 And contemplate my native clay ;
 Ere long all things conspire to tell
 I must in these dull regions dwell ;
 Then why should I start back with fear,
 To view those awful relics here ;
 Tho' now lodg'd in the arms of death,
 They once like me drew vital breath ;
 Like me they liv'd, like them must I
 Too in my turn resign and die.
 What though an hundred years I yet
 (Teach me, O God, not to forget)
 May much of health and vigour boast,
 The time is but a span at most.

Come

Come Piety, sweet child of truth!
 Thou heaven-born babe, inspire my youth!
 Be thou my tutor here, that I
 May live as I would wish to die.
 Teach me to know my God betimes,
 Ere vice, with her seducing crimes,
 Shall bribe me with terrestrial joy,
 And all my thoughts of Heaven destroy.
 For soon the great important day,
 Will God's almighty power display;
 And the dread trump shall summons all
 That move on this most spacious ball.
 How blest that man who bids this world adieu,
 Having a pious well-spent life gone through;
 Then shall he calmly bid a sweet farewell,
 And in this place of skulls in quiet dwell,
 Till the last summons bids him to appear,
 Before the great impartial Judge severe,
 To be rewarded for his righteous deeds,
 With joys that far all other joys exceeds.

For

For this my soul with speed prepare;
 For danger waits delay;
 Prepare to meet Jehovah there,
 On that most awful day.
 He will conduct you by his aid,
 From this dull scene of endless night,
 Unto a bright ethereal shade,
 Where saints and angels dwell in light;
 Where no corroding cares oppress,
 Nor agitate the mind;
 But all is perfect happiness,
 And all to joy inclin'd.
 In rapturous hopes of future bliss,
 Those awful relics then survey,
 There lies the road to paradise,
 That leads from night to endless day.
 Hark ! how the wind in hollow accents roar,
 Whistling among the trees in doleful sound,
 Yet pleasing and delightful is the hour,
 That's spent in this grand solitary round.

On

On contemplation's wing the busy mind
 Sublimely soars and tastes celestial joys,
 Expatiates in raptures unconfin'd,
 Loft to the world and all its trifling toys,
 Thrice happy he who can familiarize
 This state of immortality and death;
 That man at last shall calmly close his eyes,
 And meet salvation when depriv'd of breath,
 On seraph's wings he shall sublimely soar,
 Triumphant to the realms of joy and bliss,
 And safely land upon that long'd-for shore,
 Where tribulation shall for ever cease.

F I N I S